

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows.

--1 - 69. (Canceled).

1 70(Currently amended). A thermal treatment system for thermally treating medical
2 items to desired temperatures, wherein said medical items ~~include~~ are each associated with a
3 particular temperature range for utilization and a ~~prescribed~~ time interval for thermal treatment,
4 said thermal treatment system comprising:

5 a thermal treatment unit to thermally treat at least one medical item disposed within said
6 system;

7 a temperature sensor associated with said at least one medical item to measure
8 temperature of said at least one medical item;

9 a timer to measure at least a residence time within said system for said at least one
10 medical item; and

11 a monitor unit to control thermal treatment of said at least one medical item and to
12 monitor said temperature and said residence time of said at least one medical item for
13 compliance with said particular utilization temperature range and said thermal treatment time
14 interval in order to maintain medical item efficacy.

1 71(Previously presented). The system of claim 70 further including a display to
2 display at least one of an insertion time, said measured temperature, said desired temperature and
3 said residence time for said at least one medical item disposed within said system.

1 72(Previously presented). The system of claim 70 further including an input device to
2 facilitate entry of at least one of a desired temperature and a thermal treatment time interval for
3 each medical item disposed within said system.

1 73(Previously presented). The system of claim 70 further including at least one
2 indicator to indicate occurrence of a particular condition to a user.

1 74(Previously presented). The system of claim 73, wherein said indicator includes at
2 least one of a visual indicator and an audio indicator.

1 75(Previously presented). The system of claim 73, wherein said condition includes
2 reduction in medical item efficacy indicated by a measured temperature of a medical item
3 exceeding a corresponding utilization temperature range.

1 76(Previously presented). The system of claim 73, wherein said condition includes a
2 residence time within said system of a medical item exceeding a corresponding thermal
3 treatment time interval.

1 77(Previously presented). The system of claim 70 further including an item sensor to
2 detect when at least one of insertion and removal of a medical item occurs within said system.

1 78(Previously presented). The system of claim 77 further including an item indicator
2 to indicate to a user at least one of said medical item insertion and removal.

79(Previously presented). The system of claim 70, wherein said thermal treatment unit includes a heating device to heat said at least one medical item disposed within said system.

80(Currently amended). The system of claim 70 further including a thermal indicator to indicate to a user ~~prior a state of~~ thermal treatment of said at least one medical item prior to insertion within said thermal treatment unit.

81(Currently amended). A thermal treatment system for thermally treating medical items to desired temperatures, wherein said medical items ~~include~~ are each associated with a particular temperature range for utilization and a ~~prescribed~~ time interval for thermal treatment, said thermal treatment system comprising:

a thermal treatment unit to thermally treat at least one medical item disposed within said system;

an item sensor to detect the presence of said at least one medical item within said system;

and

a monitor unit to determine when at least one of insertion and removal of a medical item occurs within said system and to control thermal treatment of said at least one medical item.

82(Previously presented). The system of claim 81 further including:

a temperature sensor associated with said at least one medical item to measure temperature of said at least one medical item; and

a timer to measure at least a residence time within said system for said at least one medical item;

6 wherein said monitor unit monitors said temperature and said residence time of said at
7 least one medical item for compliance with said particular utilization temperature range and said
8 thermal treatment time interval in order to maintain medical item efficacy.

1 83(Previously presented). The system of claim 82 further including a display to
2 display at least one of an insertion time, said measured temperature, said desired temperature and
3 said residence time for said at least one medical item disposed within said system.

1 84(Previously presented). The system of claim 82 further including at least one
2 indicator to indicate occurrence of at least one of a reduction in medical item efficacy indicated
3 by a measured temperature of a medical item exceeding a corresponding utilization temperature
4 range and a residence time within said system of a medical item exceeding a corresponding
5 thermal treatment time interval.

1 85(Previously presented). The system of claim 81 further including an input device to
2 facilitate entry of at least one of a desired temperature and a thermal treatment time interval for
3 each medical item disposed within said system.

1 86(Previously presented). The system of claim 81 further including an item indicator
2 to indicate to a user at least one of said medical item insertion and removal.

1 87(Previously presented). The system of claim 81, wherein said thermal treatment
2 unit includes a heating device to heat said at least one medical item disposed within said system.

1 88(Currently amended). The system of claim 81 further including a thermal
2 indicator to indicate to a user ~~prior~~ a state of thermal treatment of said at least one medical item
3 prior to insertion within said thermal treatment unit.

1 89(Currently amended). A thermal treatment system for thermally treating medical items
2 to desired temperatures, wherein said medical items ~~include~~ are each associated with a particular
3 temperature range for utilization and a ~~prescribed~~ time interval for thermal treatment, said
4 thermal treatment system comprising:

5 a thermal treatment unit to thermally treat at least one medical item disposed within said
6 system; and

7 a monitor unit to determine and indicate a state of ~~prior~~ thermal treatment of said at least
8 one medical item prior to insertion within said thermal treatment unit and to control thermal
9 treatment of said at least one medical item.

1 90(Previously presented). The system of claim 89 further including:

2 a temperature sensor associated with said at least one medical item to measure
3 temperature of said at least one medical item; and

4 a timer to measure at least a residence time within said system for said at least one
5 medical item;

6 wherein said monitor unit monitors said temperature and said residence time of said at
7 least one medical item for compliance with said particular utilization temperature range and said
8 thermal treatment time interval in order to maintain medical item efficacy.

1 91(Previously presented). The system of claim 90 further including a display to
2 display at least one of an insertion time, said measured temperature, said desired temperature and
3 said residence time for said at least one medical item disposed within said system.

1 92(Previously presented). The system of claim 90 further including at least one
2 indicator to indicate occurrence of at least one of a reduction in medical item efficacy indicated
3 by a measured temperature of a medical item exceeding a corresponding utilization temperature
4 range and a residence time within said system of a medical item exceeding a corresponding
5 thermal treatment time interval.

1 93(Previously presented). The system of claim 89 further including an input device to
2 facilitate entry of at least one of a desired temperature and a thermal treatment time interval for
3 each medical item disposed within said system.

1 94(Previously presented). The system of claim 89 further including an item sensor to
2 detect when at least one of insertion and removal of a medical item occurs within said system.

1 95(Previously presented). The system of claim 94 further including an item indicator
2 to indicate to a user at least one of said medical item insertion and removal.

1 96(Previously presented). The system of claim 89, wherein said thermal treatment
2 unit includes a heating device to heat said at least one medical item disposed within said system.

1 97(Currently amended). A method of thermally treating medical items to desired
2 temperatures, wherein said medical items ~~include~~ are each associated with a particular
3 temperature range for utilization and a ~~prescribed~~ time interval for thermal treatment, said
4 method comprising:

5 (a) thermally treating at least one medical item disposed within a thermal treatment
6 system;

7 (b) measuring at least a temperature of said at least one medical item and a residence
8 time within said thermal treatment system for said at least one medical item; and

9 (c) monitoring said temperature and said residence time of said at least one medical
10 item, via said thermal treatment system, for compliance with said particular utilization
11 temperature range and said thermal treatment time interval in order to maintain medical item
12 efficacy.

1 98(Previously presented). The method of claim 97, wherein step (c) further includes:

2 (c.1) displaying at least one of an insertion time, said measured temperature, said
3 desired temperature and said residence time for said at least one medical item disposed within
4 said system.

1 99(Previously presented). The method of claim 97, wherein step (a) further includes:

2 (a.1) facilitating entry of at least one of a desired temperature and a thermal treatment
3 time interval for each medical item disposed within said thermal treatment system.

1 100(Previously presented). The method of claim 97, wherein step (c) further includes:

2 (c.1) indicating occurrence of a particular condition to a user.

1 101(Previously presented). The method of claim 100, wherein step (c.1) further
2 includes:

3 (c.1.1) indicating occurrence of a reduction in medical item efficacy indicated by a
4 measured temperature of a medical item exceeding a corresponding utilization temperature
5 range.

1 102(Previously presented). The method of claim 100, wherein step (c.1) further
2 includes:

3 (c.1.1) indicating occurrence of a residence time within said thermal treatment system of
4 a medical item exceeding a corresponding thermal treatment time interval.

1 103(Previously presented). The method of claim 97, wherein step (c) further includes:

2 (c.1) determining when at least one of insertion and removal of a medical item occurs
3 within said thermal treatment system.

1 104(Previously presented). The method of claim 103, wherein step (c) further includes:

2 (c.2) indicating to a user at least one of said medical item insertion and removal.

1 105(Previously presented). The method of claim 97, wherein step (a) further includes:

2 (a.1) heating said at least one medical item disposed within said system.

106(Currently amended). A method of thermally treating medical items to desired temperatures, wherein said medical items ~~include~~ are each associated with a particular temperature range for utilization and a ~~prescribed~~ time interval for thermal treatment, said method comprising:

(a) thermally treating at least one medical item disposed within a thermal treatment system; and

(b) determining, via said thermal treatment system, when at least one of insertion and removal of a medical item occurs within said thermal treatment system and indicating to a user at least one of said medical item insertion and removal.

107(Previously presented). The method of claim 106, wherein step (b) further includes:

(b.1) measuring at least a temperature and a residence time within said thermal treatment system for said at least one medical item; and

(b.2) monitoring said temperature and said residence time of said at least one medical item for compliance with said particular utilization temperature range and said thermal treatment time interval in order to maintain medical item efficacy.

108(Previously presented). The method of claim 107, wherein step (b) further includes:

(b.3) displaying at least one of an insertion time, said measured temperature, said desired temperature and said residence time for said at least one medical item.

109(Previously presented). The method of claim 107, wherein step (b) further includes:

(b.3) indicating occurrence of at least one of a reduction in medical item efficacy indicated by a measured temperature of a medical item exceeding a corresponding utilization temperature range and a residence time within said thermal treatment system of a medical item exceeding a corresponding thermal treatment time interval.

110(Previously presented). The method of claim 106, wherein step (a) further includes:

(a.1) facilitating entry of at least one of a desired temperature and a thermal treatment time interval for each medical item disposed within said thermal treatment system.

111(Previously presented). The method of claim 106, wherein step (a) further includes:

(a.1) heating said at least one medical item disposed within said thermal treatment system.

112(Currently amended). A method of thermally treating medical items to desired temperatures, wherein said medical items ~~include~~ are each associated with a particular temperature range for utilization and a ~~prescribed~~ time interval for thermal treatment, said method comprising:

(a) receiving at least one medical item for thermal treatment within a thermal treatment system including a thermal treatment unit; and

(b) indicating to a user, via a visual indicator, prior a state of thermal treatment of said at least one medical item prior to insertion within said thermal treatment unit.

113(Currently amended). The method of claim 112, wherein step (b) further includes:

2 (b.1) measuring a temperature of said at least one received medical item, wherein said
3 temperature indicates said ~~prior~~ state of thermal treatment.

1 114(Currently amended). The method of claim 113, wherein step (b) further includes:

2 (b.2) measuring at least a residence time within [[a]] said thermal treatment system for
3 said at least one received medical item, ~~wherein said residence time indicates said prior thermal~~
4 ~~treatment.~~

1 115(Previously presented). The system of claim 114, wherein step (b) further includes:

2 (b.3) displaying at least one of said measured temperature and said residence time for
3 said at least one received medical item.--